

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 STR-04 TRSE-00
/083 W

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R 290542Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4445
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 18930

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, JA
SUBJECT: SOHYO CHAIRMAN MAKIEDA'S VIEWS

SUMMARY: DURING WIDE-RANGING TALK WITH AMB DEC. 22, SOHYO CHAIRMAN MAKIEDA STRESSED THAT SOHYO NOT ANTI-AMERICAN AND INTERESTED IN BETTER TIES WITH US. WHILE CONFIRMING THAT SOHYO DIFFERED WITH AFL-CIO OVER DESIRABILITY OF HAVING GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH SOVIET AND CHINESE LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, HE OPTIMISTIC THAT HIS RECENT MEETING WITH GEORGE MEANY HELPED IMPROVE ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN SOHYO AND AFL-CIO. MAKIEDA ALSO HOPEFUL THAT AFL-CIO WILL ADOPT MORE EVENHANDED POLICY IN DEALING WITH RIVAL JAPANESE LABOR FEDERATIONS, WHICH HE EXPECTED WOULD EVENTUALLY MERGE IN VIEW CHANGING JAPANESE POLITICAL SITUATION. HE LABELLED LABOR DISPUTES BETWEEN US MILITARY AND LOCAL BASE WORKERS MOST SERIOUS CURRENT ISSUE BETWEEN US AND JAPAN AND EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR US LABOR POSITION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE ISSUES. MOST NOTABLE ASPECT OF CONVERSATION WAS AVOIDANCE OF ANY UNFAVORABLE REFERENCE TO US-JAPAN SECURITY TREATY AS
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SUCH, FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT SOHYO AND SOCIALIST PARTY HAVE TACITLY ACCEPTED TREATY AS FACT OF JAPANESE LIFE.
END SUMMARY.

1. SOHYO CHAIRMAN MAKIEDA, ACCOMPANIED BY HEADQUARTERS STAFF MEMBERS NORIHISA ARAI AND MASARU FUKUDA, MET WITH

AMB AND LABATT DEC. 22 FOR LENGTHY DISCUSSION. CONVERSATION TOUCHED ON SOHYO'S RECENT OVERTURES TO AFL-CIO, US-JAPAN RELATIONS, US MILITARY BASE LABOR PROBLEMS, SOHYO'S CONTACTS WITH SOVIETS AND CHINESE AND FUTURE OF JAPANESE LABOR MOVEMENT.

2. MAKIEDA EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT HIS AUGUST MEETING WITH PRES MEANY IN WASHINGTON HAD CLEARED AWAY CONSIDERABLE MISUNDERSTANDING AND WOULD SERVE AS BASIS FOR IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AFL-CIO AND SOHYO. MAKIEDA SAID BOTH SIDES RESPONSIBLE FOR PAST MISUNDERSTANDINGS. AS EXAMPLE OF MISCONCEPTION ON AMERICAN SIDE, HE CITED VIEW HE ENCOUNTERED IN WASHINGTON THAT SOHYO PARTIAL TO COMMUNIST NATIONS AND NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH US LABOR MOVEMENT. WHILE ADMITTING THAT SMALL MINORITY IN SOHYO HELD THAT VIEW, MAKIEDA INSISTED THAT IT WAS NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ORGANIZATION AS A WHOLE. MAKIEDA SAID HE HAD ARGUED AT AFL-CIO HEAD-QUARTERS THAT SINCE SOHYO, AS LARGEST JAPANESE LABOR ORGANIZATION, ALSO SOUGHT CLOSER TIES WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF AMERICAN WORKERS, AFL-CIO SHOULD NOT CONFINES ITSELF TO DEALING ONLY WITH DOMESTIC. MAKIEDA THOUGHT THIS ARGUMENT HAD IMPRESSED PRES MEANY. MAKIEDA INDICATED THAT HE PLANNED TO INVITE AFL-CIO TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NEXT SOHYO CONVENTION AND HOPED AFL-CIO WOULD ACCEPT INVITATION.

3. MAKIEDA SAID THAT EVEN AFTER HIS WASHINGTON TRIP, SOME MISUNDERSTANDING REMAINS. HE WAS DISTRESSED TO LEARN FROM SOHYO STAFFER FUKUDA, WHO VISITED US THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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FALL TO OBSERVE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, THAT SOME AMERICAN UNION OFFICIALS BELIEVED MAKIEDA'S RECENT TRIP TO SOVIET UNION WAS MEANT TO "COUNTERBALANCE" HIS US TRIP. MAKIEDA SAID THIS WAS SIMPLY NOT TRUE. HE VISITED SOVIET UNION IN HIS CAPACITY AS VICE PRESIDENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS' ORGANIZATION (WCOTP), NOT AS SOHYO CHAIRMAN, AND DID NOT DISCUSS US OR AMERICAN LABOR DEVELOPMENTS EVEN ONCE DURING HIS MOSCOW STAY. MAKIEDA OBSERVED WRONGLY THAT HIS SOVIET HOSTS WERE SO BUSY CRITICIZING CHINA THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE TIME EVEN TO MENTION HIS WASHINGTON VISIT.

4. MAKIEDA SAID THAT AT PRESENT AFL-CIO AND SOHYO DIFFERED PRINCIPALLY OVER HOW TO DEAL WITH SOVIET AND PRC LABOR ORGANIZATIONS. MAKIEDA ATTRIBUTED AFL-CIO'S STRONG EMOTIONAL ANTAGONISM TOWARDS SOVIETS IN PARTICULAR TO POSTWAR FIGHT TO ESTABLISH ICFTU AND TO COMMUNIST TACTICS IN ILO, EVENTS

WHICH SOHYO LEADERS HAD NOT EXPERIENCED. ON OTHER
HAND, SOHYO, LOOKING TO FUTURE, BELIEVED IT COULD
CONTRIBUTE TO WORLD PEACE BY MAINTAINING COMMUNICATIONS
WITH LABOR GROUPS IN THREE MOST POWERFUL NATIONS--
US, USSR AND PRC. MAKIEDA NOTED THAT EVEN SOME
DOMEI AFFILIATES HAD ALREADY QUIETLY INITIATED EXCHANGES
WITH THEIR SOVIET COUNTERPARTS AND PREDICTED THAT AMERICAN
UNIONS WOULD ADOPT THE SAME COURSE WITHIN NEXT
DECADE. HE NOTED THAT USG WAS POINTING WAY AS
IT MOVED TOWARDS MORE STABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH
USSR AND PRC.

5. WHEN ASKED WHAT HE REGARDED AS THE MAJOR CURRENT ISSUE
IN US-JAPAN RELATIONS, MAKIEDA LABOR DISPUTES
BETWEEN US MILITARY AND JAPANESE EMPLOYEES ON US BASES.
WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT EMBASSY HAD NO DIRECT ROLE
IN MILITARY LABOR NEGOTIATIONS, MAKIEDA URGED AMB FROM
STANDPOINT OF US-JAPAN RELATIONS TO USE HIS GOOD OFFICES
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TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM (SEPTTEL).

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6. REGARDING US-JAPAN TRADE ISSUES, MAKIEDA SAID THAT HIS PREVIOUS OPPOSITION TO US LABOR'S PROTECTIONIST MOVES HAD WEAKENED FOLLOWING HIS MEETING, AT PRES. MEANY'S SUGGESTION, WITH PLUMBERS AND PIPE FITTERS UNION OFFICIALS. HE WAS IMPRESSED BY PLUMBERS ARGUMENT AGAINST EXCESSIVE IMPORTATION OF JAPANESE STEEL PIPE FOR USE ON ALASKA PIPE LINE ON GROUNDS THAT IT WAS TAKING JOBS AWAY FROM US WORKERS. HE FOUND PARTICULARLY CONVINCING US UNION POSITION THAT IT WOULD NOT PRESS FOR RESTRICTIONS ON IMPORTS OF GOODS FROM COUNTRIES WITH WAGE LEVELS EQUAL TO THOSE OF US. MAKIEDA FORCED TO ADMIT THAT JAPANESE UNIONS HAD NOT YET DONE ENOUGH TO BRING THEIR MEMBERS UP TO US STANDARDS OR TO CONTROL EFFORTS OF JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN TO INCREASE THEIR COMPETITIVE POWER BY MANUFACTURING TEXTILES AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT IN VERY LOW-WAGE ASIAN COUNTRIES.

7. TURNING AGAIN TO SOHYO'S RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST NATIONS, MAKIEDA SAID HE WOULD BE VISITING PRC AS SOHYO CHAIRMAN IN MARCH OF 1977, IN ORDER TO DISCUSS
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MEANS OF IMPROVING CONTACTS BETWEEN CHINESE AND JAPANESE WORKERS. AS COURTESY, HE WOULD LISTEN TO WHATEVER HIS HOSTS HAD TO SAY BUT AS MATTER OF PRINCIPLE HE WOULD NOT CRITICIZE THIRD PARTIES WHILE IN FOREIGN COUNTRY. BOTH SOVIETS AND CHINESE HOPE SOHYO WILL ESPOUSE THEIR PARTICULAR VIEW OF "HEGEMONY." HOWEVER, SO LONG AS HE REMAINS CHAIRMAN OF SOHYO, HE WILL NEITHER ALLOW ORGANIZATION TO BECOME THE "CAPTIVE" OF FOREIGN POWER NOR OTHERWISE COMPROMISE SOHYO'S INDEPENDENCE. MAKIEDA OPTIMISTIC THEREFORE THAT PRC VISIT WILL NOT AFFECT SOHYO'S RELATIONS WITH EITHER US OR USSR.

8. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE HAD ANY PARTICULAR MESSAGE FROM SOHYO FOR USG OR AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT, MAKIEDA REPEATED THAT SOHYO WAS NOT ANTI-AMERICAN. HE HOPED, THEREFORE, THAT AFL-CIO WOULD GRANT IT EQUAL TREATMENT WITH DOMESTIC. HE NOTED THAT JAPANESE POLITICAL PANORAMA WAS CHANGING. AS LDP'S MAJORITY DISAPPEARS, IT LOSES ITS ABILITY TO PLAY OFF ONE SECTOR OF JAPANESE ORGANIZED LABOR AGAINST THE OTHER. FUTURE WILL SEE EITHER LDP INVITING PART OF OPPOSITION TO JOIN IT AS JUNIOR PARTNERS OR OPPOSITION COALITION AS SUCH. FOR LABOR TO EXERCISE MAXIMUM LEVERAGE ON OPPOSITION, IT MUST UNITE. TREND TOWARDS LABOR UNIFICATION IS THEREFORE IRRESISTIBLE. THESE LABOR UNITY EFFORTS WOULD TAKE SOME TIME, HOWEVER, SINCE COMMON STRUGGLES AT FACTORY LEVEL WOULD HAVE

TO PREVAIL OVER PERCEIVED POLITICAL DIFFERENCES AT
TOP. IN MEANTIME, AFL-CIO SHOULD CAREFULLY
WATCH JAPANESE LABOR AND BE EVEN HANDED IN ITS TREATMENT.
MAKIEDA NOTED THAT PROBLEMS CREATED FOR AFL-CIO BY
EXISTENCE OF TWO RIVAL NATIONAL CENTERS IN JAPAN
WERE ANALOGOUS TO THOSE ENCOUNTERED BY HIS OWN
TEACHERS' UNION (NIKKYOSO) IN DEALING WITH COMPETI-
TION BETWEEN NEA AND AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
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TEACHERS, NIKKYOSO, WHILE WISHING TWO
AMERICAN TEACHERS' GROUP WOULD MERGE, HAD DEVELOPED
GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH. MAKIEDA HOPED THAT
AFL-CIO WOULD DO SAME VIS-A-VIS SOHYO AND DOMEL.

9. COMMENT: CONVERSATION REMAINED AMIABLE AND LOW KEY
THROUGHOUT. MAKIEDA APPEARED EXTREMELY APPRECIATIVE OF
OPPORTUNITY TO EXPOUND HIS VIEWS IN
INFORMAL SETTING. COMPLETELY AVOIDING RHETORIC OF
HIS PREDECESSORS, MAKIEDA STRESSED ONE BASIC
THEME--HIS DESIRE TO FOSTER BETTER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
SOHYO AND AFL-CIO AND HIS HOPE THAT LATTER WILL
RECIPROCAT. AS IF TO UNDERSCORE THIS POINT, MAKIEDA
BROUGHT WITH HIM TO LUNCH SOHYO PLANNING BUREAU DIRECTOR
ARAI, POSTAL UNION (ZENTEI) ALUMNUS AND PRINCIPAL
PROPONENT IN SOHYO HEADQUARTERS OF GREATLY EXPANDED TIES
WITH US UNIONS.
PERHAPS EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT THAT WHAT MAKIEDA
SAID IS WHAT HE DELIBERATELY IGNORED. PROVIDED
SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES TO HIGHLIGHT
IRRITANTS IN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, MAKIEDA CHOSE
NOT CITE US-JAPAN SECURITY TREATY. EVEN FIVE
YEARS AGO ANY SOHYO LEADER MEETING US GOVERNMENT
OFFICIAL WOULD HAVE FELT COMPELLED AT LEAST TO PLACE
ON RECORD HIS OPPOSITION TO MST. MAKIEDA'S
DECISION NOT TO DO SO IS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT
SOHYO'S LEADERSHIP AND SOCIALIST PARTY (OF WHICH
MAKIEDA IS AN ACTIVE MEMBER) HAVE CONCLUDED THAT,
SINCE TREATY ITSELF IS SO WIDELY ACCEPTED BY
JAPANESE PUBLIC, THEIR FORMAL ANTI-TREATY POSITION HAS
BECOME SERIOUS POLITICAL LIABILITY.
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